

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 289260

FOL MADRID 09553 SENT ACTION SECSTATE DEC 2, 1977 REPEATED
TO YOU QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 09553

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PROP, SP, US

SUBJECT: RADIO LIBERTY

1. THE SPANISH PRESS BOTH DECEMBER 1 AND DECEMBER 2 HAVE
PUBLISHED ARTICLES (SEPTTEL) REPORTING PUBLIC STATEMENTS
IN WASHINGTON BY RADIO LIBERTY PRESIDENT MIKELSON AT A
"NATIONAL PRESS CLUB BREAKFAST MEETING" TO THE EFFECT
THAT RADIO LIBERTY WOULD SOON REQUEST FUNDS TO PURCHASE
NEW TRANSMITTERS FOR RADIO LIBERTY IN SPAIN. THE
ARTICLES WENT ON TO SAY THAT MIKELSON HAD INDICATED THAT
AN AGREEMENT FOR A NEW CONTRACT FOR RADIO LIBERTY WOULD
BE NEGOTIATED BETWEEN SPAIN AND THE UNITED STATES NEXT
SPRING.

2. I HAVE INVESTED A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF TIME, EFFORT
AND INTEREST IN KEEPING THE RADIO LIBERTY IN OPERATION,
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AND EACH TIME I COME TO WASHINGTON I HAVE DISCUSSED THE
STATUS OF THE PROBLEM WITH WALTER ROBERTS. IT HAD MOST
CLEARLY BEEN AGREED BY ROBERTS AND MYSELF LAST SEPTEMBER
THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE ON RADIO
LIBERTY AND THAT WE WOULD AVOID ANY ACTIONS OR STATEMENTS
WHICH MIGHT TEND TO EMBARRASS THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT OR,
INDEED, TO FORCE THEIR HAND WITH RESPECT TO A NEW CONTRACT

WHICH MIGHT WELL END UP NOT IN OUR FAVOR. IT HAD ALSO BEEN AGREED WITH ROBERTS THAT AT SOME POINT BEFORE IT WAS NECESSARY TO MAKE PUBLIC OUR BUDGETARY REQUEST FOR NEW TRANSMITTERS FOR RADIO LIBERTY SPAIN, I WOULD GO TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO EXPLAIN TO HIM THE BACKGROUND AND THE REASONS. HOWEVER, IN SPITE OF THESE UNDERSTANDINGS AND WITHOUT ANY CONSULTATION WITH ME, RADIO LIBERTY PRESIDENT MIKELSON HAS APPARENTLY CHOSEN TO GO PUBLIC ON THIS MATTER.

3. I CANNOT TELL WHAT EFFECT MIKELSON'S STATEMENTS MAY ULTIMATELY HAVE ON THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, THE HEAD OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE PRESS DEPARTMENT HAS ALREADY CALLED TO EXPRESS CONCERN OVER THEM AND TO CHARACTERIZE THEM AS BEING UNHELPFUL.

4. LITTLE OR NO PROBLEM HAS BEEN ENCOUNTERED IN THE OPERATION OF RADIO LIBERTY ON THE BASIS OF THE UNDERSTANDING WHICH FOREIGN MINISTER OREJA AND I HAD REACHED LAST FEBRUARY AND WHICH I HAD CAREFULLY EXPLAINED TO BOTH ABSHIRE IN MARCH AND TO ROBERTS IN SEPTEMBER. HOWEVER, I CANNOT GUARANTEE, AS A RESULT OF MIKELSON'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND IN LIGHT OF THE MANY POLITICAL PROBLEMS WHICH NOW FACE THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT, THAT THE GOS MAY NOT NOW FEEL OBLIGED TO TAKE A NEGATIVE ATTITUDE NOT ONLY ON NEW TRANSMITTERS, BUT ON THE WHOLE QUESTION OF CONFIDENTIAL

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CONTINUED RADIO LIBERTY PRESENCE IN SPAIN.

5. I SHOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING IMMEDIATELY A REPORT ON WHAT MIKELSON ACTUALLY DID SAY AND WHY MY PREVIOUS UNDERSTANDINGS WITH ROBERTS WERE SO TOTALLY IGNORED.

6. FINALLY, I WOULD HOPE THAT THE DEPARTMENT WILL LET RFE/RL KNOW THAT IT REGARDS AS UNACCEPTABLE THE LACK OF COORDINATION ON THIS SENSITIVE ISSUE. IF WE ARE TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SPANISH, WHETHER THEY ARE CONDUCTED DIRECTLY BY RADIO LIBERTY WITH THE SPANISH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON OR THROUGH THIS EMBASSY, FULL COORDINATION IS ESSENTIAL. STABLER UNQUOTE
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